

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

February 10, 2004

FROM: **WALLY HILL**, County Administrative Officer
County Administrative Office

PETER R. HILLS, Fire Chief/Fire Warden
San Bernardino County Consolidated Fire District

SUBJECT: CONFIRE JPA NETWORK SERVICES FOR COUNTY FIRE AND SPECIAL DISTRICTS DEPARTMENT

RECOMMENDATION: Acting as the governing body of County Service Area 70, San Bernardino County Consolidated Fire District (County Fire):

1. Find that procuring computer network services and pertinent electronic equipment from the CONFIRE JPA, in lieu of County Information Services Department (ISD), is consistent with the general objectives of County Policy 07-14 as it relates to the assignment of computer responsibility for this service.
2. Authorize County Fire and Special Districts Department to procure computer network services and related equipment from CONFIRE JPA, on a trial basis, for a period of one year.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The CONFIRE JPA (CONFIRE) operates and manages the San Bernardino County Communications Center (Comm Center) located in Rialto. The member agencies of CONFIRE are the cities of Colton, Loma Linda, Redlands, Rialto and the San Bernardino County Fire Department. CONFIRE provides dispatch services to member agencies in addition to contract dispatch, network and informational services to Chino Valley, Mount Baldy, Running Springs, and the Twenty-nine Palms fire agencies.

Approximately six years ago, CONFIRE began developing a network system to interconnect all fire stations currently served by CONFIRE, and the anticipated addition of twenty-three County Service Area 38 fire stations. The primary rationale for the network was to provide connectivity for integration of the computer aided dispatch (CAD) system data (used by the dispatch center) with the incident reporting software and related records management data functions, such as training records (used at the fire station/administrative offices). All CONFIRE agencies utilize and jointly fund the CAD and records management software applications. A major component of the CONFIRE network system was the connectivity of all the County Fire stations since none of the stations were on a networked system.

Discussions were held in 1998 with County Information Services (ISD) to provide these services; however, the ISD was only able to provide connectivity to a limited number of sites, and the network fees were determined by CONFIRE to be cost prohibitive at that time. CONFIRE subsequently designed a network system for all of the sixty-three County Fire stations, the

twenty-three city and contract fire stations, plus County Fire administration, the Special Districts Department Administrative Office, the Office of Emergency Services, the Office of the Fire Marshal, and the Training/Vehicle Services/Household Hazardous Materials facilities at the San Bernardino International Airport (SBIA). Prior to the development of the CONFIRE network, County Fire's connections to the County/ISD network were from Fire Administration (5th Street, San Bernardino), Comm. Center/Emergency Operations Center in Rialto, and from the facilities at SBIA.

The CONFIRE network has been installed for all of the city and thirty-eight county fire stations and Comm Center. Approximately 18 months ago, CONFIRE began to plan the migration of the final network connections (including county fire administration and other support offices) onto the CONFIRE network. ISD management expressed concerns with the security of the systems and long-term cost to the County, and subsequently, several meetings were held with ISD, the previous County Administrative Officer (CAO) John Michaelson, and CONFIRE representatives including CONFIRE Board Chairperson Susan Peppler (Redlands City Council Member). CAO Michaelson then tasked CONFIRE and ISD to conduct a comprehensive interoperability study including a costs analysis of the associated costs. Follow-up meetings were held with CAO Michaelson and Supervisor Dennis Hansberger (CONFIRE Board Member). The report was also presented to the CONFIRE Board of Directors in May 2003 who voted unanimously to support CONFIRE providing the network services for County Fire and the Special Districts Department.

An important conclusion reached by both CONFIRE and ISD in the interoperability report determined that a single provider, due to the integrated offices functions at the County Fire/Special Districts administrative offices, should provide the network services for both departments. The interoperability study also outlines that the primary mission critical software and essential interconnectivity relationship is between the fire station and the communications center dispatch computer functions. Since this mission critical interconnectivity is currently in place for all other CONFIRE members and contract agencies, it is staff's perspective that it is highly desirable that County Fire be on the same network system to substantially simplify and reduce costs to implement future software and network systems.

Following the retirement of CAO Michaelson, additional meetings were held with the CONFIRE representatives, the new CAO Wally Hill, and Supervisor Hansberger to review all of the operability and cost related issues. A recommendation was made by CAO Hill to approve CONFIRE as the service provider for County Fire and Special Districts with the proviso that the network management and connectivity would serve as a pilot project with a commitment that the County/ISD and CONFIRE will review the interoperability at the end of one year. Subsequently, the CAO office advised that since the network service provider for County Fire and Special Districts would be other than ISD, this exception to the existing County Policy Number 07-14-Communications and Electronic Equipment would require Board of Supervisors approval.

The Policy Statement for County Policy Number 07-14 reads as follows: "It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors to provide and maintain effective County communications and electronics equipment classed as Fixed Assets". The Policy Amplification further references "General Objectives" which states that the policy shall be achieved principally through standards and assignments of central responsibility for service, communications and electronic equipment as administered thru ISD/Communications. Staff has determined that is in the best interest of County Fire and the Special Districts Department to maintain effective communication systems that are achieved through a central service provider, which is CONFIRE JPA at this time, as recommended by the CONFIRE and ISD Interoperability Study. This study further indicated that the costs were comparable between CONFIRE and ISD.

Approval of these recommendations will allow the CONFIRE JPA to provide network services to the County Fire and the Special Districts Departments, and that this action is consistent with County Policy 07-14.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL BY OTHERS: This action has been reviewed and approved by County Counsel (L. Thomas Krahelski, Deputy, 387-5436) on January 30, 2004, Information Services Department (Leyden Hahn, Chief Information Officer, 388-5501) on December 14, 2003 and by the County Administrative Office (Wayne Thies, Administrative Analyst, 387-5409) on January 30, 2004.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Based on the current rates charged by ISD (reduced from \$56 to \$36 in March 2003 utilizing retained earnings), the network service costs for County Fire/Special Districts were approximately the same irrespective of whether ISD or CONFIRE provided the services. CONFIRE's budget formulas will reflect the County Fire and Special Districts related direct costs (phone lines/support equipment) and any shared costs with the other CONFIRE member agencies. If the recommendations are approved, the approximate monthly charges for network related service to County Fire and Special Districts are \$34,979 (CONFIRE) and \$9,355 (ISD), for a total monthly charge of \$44,334. The \$34,979 monthly charge for CONFIRE services represents WAN circuit costs and connectivity to Special Districts and County Fire District stations. The \$9,355 monthly charge for ISD related services represents a variety of direct charges, such as CPU Mainframe, EMACS, and development/programming charges.

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT(S): All Districts

PRESENTER: Peter R. Hills (909) 387-5948